

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- Today, the Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on tax incentives for land use, conservation and preservation. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) was invited to offer testimony before the Committee because of his role as the congressional champion of the livable communities movement. Blumenauer's testimony praised the bills being highlighted by the committee, discussed the importance of open space and historical preservation and introduced components of his own livable communities agenda. Two bills of particular note in the Congressman's testimony are his Community Character Act (H.R. 1433) and Bicycle Commuter Act (H.R. 1265).

"I thank the members of the Committee for their attention on this important matter and the consideration of these legislative proposals that will help people and localities create the types of communities they want to live in," said Blumenauer. "These are incentives and grants that allow the federal government to be a good partner with state and local governments, so that they are able to create their own visions of livable communities - places where families are safe, healthy, and economically secure."

The following bills were under discussion at this hearing: H.R. 1309, to encourage contributions of capital gain real property for conservation purposes (through changes to charitable donation and estate tax rules); H.R. 2290, to encourage land sales for conservation purposes (through a 50 percent capital gains exclusion); H.R. 1711, to provide more generous rules for the treatment of tax bonds issued to acquire renewable resources on land subject to conservation easement; and H.R. 2264, to make permanent and expand eligible expensing of environmental remediation costs (Brownsfields).

The hearing began at 2:00 pm in 1100 Longworth House Office Building. The focus of the hearing was on tax bills relating to land use conservation and preservation. The House Oversight Subcommittee held a similar hearing in 1999. A panel of Congressional Members, the Department of the Treasury, and a panel of public/private organizations in support of the land use, conservation, and preservation tax bills made up the witness list at today's hearing.